

In the Claims:

Please cancel Claim 24, without prejudice; amend Claims 22, 23, 25 and 26; and add new Claims 27-38 as indicated below. The status of all pending claims is as follows:

1-21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) A vacuum processing apparatus comprising:

a floor panel;

a fixing block ~~provided on~~ connected to the floor panel;

a vacuum chamber provided on the floor panel;

~~a couple pair of~~ vacuum pumps provided on the floor panel, said vacuum pumps being fixed to the floor panel near bottom portions thereof;

a pipe connecting the ~~vacuum,~~ vacuum chamber to each of the vacuum pumps for evacuating the vacuum chamber;

a flexible pipe included in a part of the pipe;

an inlet pipe included in a part of the pipe for connecting the flexible pipe to each of the corresponding vacuum pumps; and

~~a vibration transmission suppressing mechanism for maintaining~~ mechanism that includes a bar fixed to each of a rising portion of the inlet pipes and a chain block fixed to a central part of the bar and the fixing block, said mechanism being connected via a first connection to the fixing block, at one end thereof, and being connected via a second

connection to top parts of each of the vacuum pumps, at an opposite end thereof, wherein said mechanism is configured and arranged to maintain a distance between the inlet pipe and the fixing block in an extending direction of the flexible pipe so as not to shrink the flexible pipe pipe, in the extending direction, at a lifetime of evacuation, wherein:

each of the vacuum pumps are provided in parallel with each other with a gap therebetween, and

~~the vibration transmission suppressing mechanism is provided between the~~
vacuum pumps.

23. (Currently Amended) The vacuum processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein:

the inlet pipe is provided ~~on aon the~~ top part of each of the corresponding vacuum pumps.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (Currently Amended) The vacuum processing apparatus according to ~~claim 24~~claim 22, wherein:

the chain block is provided between the vacuum pumps.

26. (Currently Amended) The vacuum processing apparatus according to claim 25, wherein:

the inlet pipe is provided on a vacuum chamber-side of a top part of each of the corresponding vacuum pump, and

the fixing block is provided between the vacuum pumps and ~~On~~ an opposite side with respect to the vacuum chamber.

27. (New) The vacuum processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein each of said vacuum pumps is seated upon a plurality of cushion members, which are positioned between said vacuum pump and an associated base member, and further wherein said base members are attached to the floor panel.

28. (New) The vacuum processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said bar is a quadrangular bar.

29. (New) The vacuum processing apparatus according to claim 22, wherein said chain block operates in a direction to expand the flexible pipe.

30. (New) A substrate bonding method for a liquid crystal display device, comprising the steps of:

arranging an upper chuck plate and a lower chuck plate in a vacuum chamber so that (i) the upper chuck plate is capable of moving up and down with respect to the lower chuck plate and (ii) the lower chuck plate is capable of moving in directions X, Y, and θ ;

holding two substrates by the upper chuck plate and the lower chuck plate, respectively, the two substrates having alignment marks, respectively;

closing the vacuum chamber;

evacuating the vacuum chamber by a vacuum pump connected to the vacuum chamber via a flexible pipe having a bellows-like shape;

moving, by the upper chuck plate, the substrate held by the upper chuck plate to a position where the two substrates are almost in contact with each other;

calculating an amount of deviation between the alignment marks of the two substrates by observing the alignment marks by cameras provided in the vacuum chamber;

correcting the amount of deviation by moving the lower chuck plate; and

after completing the correction of the amount of deviation, bonding the two substrates to each other by pressing the substrate held by the upper chuck plate against the substrate held by the lower chuck plate under a predetermined pressure, wherein:

the flexible pipe is fixed so as not to shrink at a time of evacuating the vacuum chamber.

31. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 30, wherein a vacuum pump side of the flexible pipe is fixed.

32. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 31, wherein:

by a coupling member, the vacuum pump side of the flexible pipe is fixed to a fixing block arranged on a floor panel to which the vacuum pump is fixed.

33. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 31, wherein the coupling member is a chain block.

34. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 33, further comprising the steps of:

connecting two vacuum pumps to the vacuum chamber by flexible pipes, respectively, the flexible pipes extending in parallel with each other;

providing a quadrangular bar to a vacuum pump sides of the flexible pipes, the quadrangular bar extending horizontally with respect to the flexible pipes and being fixed to both the flexible pipes; and

fixing the quadrangular bar to the fixing block by the chain block.

35. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 34, wherein the chain block fixes a center of the quadrangular bar to the fixing block.

36. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 34, wherein the chain block is operated in a direction to extend the flexible pipes.

37. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 35, wherein the chain block is provided between the vacuum pumps.

38. (New) The substrate bonding method according to claim 30, wherein each of the two substrates is a glass substrate from which a plurality of liquid crystal panels are acquired.